



# EAGLE PARENT NEWS

## *the first year*

December 2018

## TALKING TO YOUR STUDENT ABOUT FIRST SEMESTER GRADES

Having a conversation with your student about first semester grades is important. As we all know, they are a meaningful measure of how students are doing in college. Grades are the student's responsibility, but it is reasonable for you to ask to talk about them.

As you approach the conversation about first semester grades, carefully consider your own expectations. Were grades something you discussed with your student before the college semester started? Was your student expecting a certain grade point average? How about you?

If either of you had expectations, have those changed over the course of the semester? Reflecting on these questions will help guide this first conversation about college grades.

Here are some suggestions to help you with the discussion about first semester grades:

- **Expect that you may have to bring up the topic of first semester grades.** Do not assume that all is well if you don't hear anything. Students may not feel comfortable discussing grades, especially if they were lower than expected. Also, remember that grades go directly to students through their MyClarion page and, unless you have



access to your student's username and password, the only way you will find out about grades is to ask him/her.

- **Select the right time for the conversation.**

Grades will be released from the Registrar's Office no later than Thursday, Dec. 20, so you may want to wait until then to initiate the conversation even though your student may already know his/her grades before then. Also, allow time for a real discussion.

Depending on your student's grades and expectations that both of you had, you may need time to talk about the bigger picture.

continued...

## FALL 2018 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

**Residence Halls Close:**  
Fri., Dec. 14, at 6 p.m.

**Final Grades Available:**  
Thurs., Dec. 20

**Residence Halls Open:**  
Sat., Jan. 12, at 10 a.m

**Spring Semester Begins:**  
Mon., Jan. 14

## OUR STAFF

**DIRECTOR:**  
Dr. Rich Lane

**FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS  
COACHES:**

Bonita Bailey  
Dani Emings  
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## **CU GOLDEN EAGLES** *home schedule*

### **Men's Basketball:**

Dec. 8 Mansfield Univ. (3 p.m.)

Dec. 18 Millersville Univ. (7:30 p.m.)

Dec. 19 Shippensburg Univ.  
(7:30 p.m.)

Dec. 30 Penn State Fayette (5 p.m.)

Jan. 9 Seton Hill Univ. (7:30 p.m.)

Jan. 12 Mercyhurst Univ. (3 p.m.)

### **Women's Basketball:**

Dec. 8 Mansfield Univ. (1 p.m.)

Dec. 18 Millersville Univ. (5:30 p.m.)

Dec. 19 Shippensburg Univ.  
(5:30 p.m.)

Jan. 9 Mercyhurst Univ. (1 p.m.)

### **Wrestling:**

Dec. 21 University of Pittsburgh  
(7 p.m.)

Jan. 9 Liu Post (7 p.m.)

Jan. 13 Bloomsburg Univ. (2 p.m.)

*Matches are held in  
Marwick-Boyd Auditorium*

**CU students are admitted free with  
valid ID!**

- **Keep in mind that first semester grades are often lower than high school grades.**

This semester was a time of transition for your student. In the first semester, students have to acclimate to new living arrangements, new faculty with higher expectations and new friends. In addition, they needed to establish a good time management plan and may have needed to learn new study strategies. All of these challenges required focus and may have contributed to lower grades.

- **Help your student look at the big picture and evaluate the grades that were not as expected.**

Were the less than expected grades earned in classes that were the most difficult? Was it the particular content or the teaching style of the professor? Ask your student what he/she would do differently.

- **Help your student develop a plan and think of strategies moving forward into the second semester.**

Does your student need to work on time management or explore some different study strategies? Is your student rethinking their major based on this first semester grade report? Suggest a meeting with a First-Year Success Coach at the start of the spring semester. We can help your student sort through these issues.

- **Congratulate good work.**

If your student ended the semester with good grades, recognize that this is usually due to hard work and a successful transition to college. Celebrate the great start!

Having a conversation about grades can be difficult – especially the first semester. It's all about finding that fine line between encouraging and supporting your student and still holding him/her accountable. An important reminder is that any missteps are valuable learning opportunities and the second semester should be viewed as a fresh start!

## **IMPORTANT PROCESSES THAT HAVE ALREADY STARTED**

- Registering for spring classes (through Jan. 14, 2019)
- On-campus housing sign-ups for next year (Sign up by Feb. 1, 2019 to avoid the \$200 application fee!)
- Completion of FAFSA (now through May 1, 2019)

*Has your student  
completed these?*



## WHAT *is* ACADEMIC PROBATION?

After semester grades are released, Clarion University issues a formal warning to all students who have an overall or cumulative grade point average (GPA) that falls below a 2.0. The warning is referred to as “academic probation” and indicates that the student falls below the requirement for “good academic standing.” It is meant to be a “wake-up” call that indicates the student must take steps to improve their academic performance. Not doing so can result in dismissal from the university.

This semester, all students that fall under the 2.0 GPA will

automatically be enrolled in the academic probation program, SOAR2Success (S2S). Students in the program will be contacted by a First-Year Success Coach as soon as Fall semester grades are released in December. The coach will discuss with students the necessary steps that must be followed to start S2S. Students will need to complete some steps **before** the semester begins, so that they can start the first week of classes, on Jan. 14, ready to go. First-Year Success Coaches will meet with their assigned students throughout the semester to provide encouragement and accountability.

Keep in mind that you, as the parent, will not know your student is on academic probation unless

you have had that all important discussion about semester grades. Because of FERPA laws, the news of academic probationary status will be given directly to the student, not the parents. If your student shares with you that he/she earned below a 2.0 GPA, encourage your student to answer any phone calls from the University and to check their Eagle mail account as their coach will be reaching out to each student that is on probation. They are not alone as they work on progressing academically.

Coaches will help students develop a plan to overcome this challenge. With hard work and the acceptance of responsibility, academic probation can be turned around and your student can get on the path to success.

# THE WINTER BREAK



One of the perks of being a college student – and one that many high school students look forward to – is the extended break between the fall and spring semesters. You may also be looking forward to having your student home for an extended period to share in some quality family time. The reality, once the busyness of the holidays is over, is that the presence of your student may create some tension at home – for a variety of reasons. Here are a few things to consider before the winter break begins.

- Final exams are a stressful time for most students, so the first few days after the end of the semester, your student will probably want to rest more than anything else.
- Unless you have a commuter student, the family dynamic has most likely changed while your student has been away.

You have had fewer disruptions and possibly, a quieter house. Younger siblings may also have adjusted to being the oldest child in the house. Expect some tension as everyone adapts to the reentry of your college student.

- Again, unless you have a commuter student, you may need to have a conversation about family rules and expectations. Students have been independent on campus. They have set their own schedules – coming and going, eating and sleeping when they want. These routines may not mesh with family ones. You may need to discuss a compromise.
- Besides the valuable down time your student is getting over this break, discuss other ways to spend the time off. Maybe your student is lucky enough to

return to a job they had over the summer break or, perhaps, find a temporary job for the holidays. If not, could your student spend this time job shadowing or volunteering? Both of these activities will help build their resume and will be beneficial when applying to graduate programs. Your student could also get started with the spring semester by buying and reading texts for the new semester!

***Happy Holidays  
to you and your family  
from Clarion University's  
Center for First Year  
Experience!***

# LOOKING BACK AT THE FIRST SEMESTER: OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

As the fall semester finishes, your student will want to reflect not only on their academic experiences, but also their involvement outside of class. A lot of learning happens outside the classroom and students that are active in clubs and organizations are generally more satisfied with their college experience.

Your student should not only be making connections with their professors and students in their classes, but also going to university sponsored events and exploring the campus.

At Clarion University we have over 135 Registered Student Organizations.



One of those organizations alone (the University Activities Board) hosted over 50 programs this semester! There are plenty of ways for your student to find others with similar interests, but don't forget to encourage them to attend something outside of their comfort zone. This could not only teach them a new perspective or skill, but also create lasting memories. To stay connected and up-to-date on what is happening around campus, have your student log on to the [CU Connect](#) website to explore student organization and find events. They can also download the [Corq app](#) to view events happening around campus.

## INFORMATION RESIDENCE LIFE WANTS *you* TO KNOW!

### Housing

All students are required to leave University housing within 24 hours of their last final exam or by Friday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. (whichever comes first). If a later departure time is needed, the student should contact their Residence Hall staff by Tuesday, Dec. 11 to discuss alternatives. If housing is needed over the break, students must discuss special arrangements with Residence Hall staff and see this [form](#) for fee information, etc.

When leaving for home students should carefully read the information sheet they have

received from their Residence Life staff. Specific directions on how students should leave their rooms will be outlined there. Please keep in mind that the University assumes no responsibility for personal belongings left in rooms, so your student may want to consider taking home computer and stereo equipment, etc. over the winter break.

### Dining

Flex dollars not used during the fall will be available during the spring semester (unless your student is a commuter or lives at Reinhard and

has a flex only plan that was canceled). Also note that the meal plan your student chose for the fall semester automatically rolls over to the spring. If your student wishes to change the plan they need to contact Residence Life or visit [www.dineoncampus.com](http://www.dineoncampus.com).

If students arrive on campus for the beginning of the spring semester on Saturday, Jan. 12, they will not be able to use their meal plan until 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 13. Brunch and dinner will be available at Eagle Commons on Saturday and brunch on Sunday, but Flex dollars must be used to pay for the meals.

## Save the date!

Family Day  
Sunday, March 23, 2019

# FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS *questioning* THEIR MAJOR



It is common for first-year students to question their choice of a major. In fact, about one-third of college students change their major before they graduate, according to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#). There are variety of reasons why students may become uncertain about their initial decision. They may have chosen a major in the first place based on family or peer influence, or an awareness of good job opportunities for graduates with that major. What may have been lacking in the decision was a true self-reflection and the development of personal goals. Even after one semester, students complete college course work and have new experiences that help them learn more about their own abilities and interests. This may cause them to question their major. Here are some things for you, as a parent or family member, to consider if your student expresses a dissatisfaction with his/her major choice:

- Recognize that doubting the choice of a major is natural.

A student's uncertainty may be due to the challenge of studying in one or more of their classes, their changing interests or because of their interactions with faculty and/or students in the major.

- Listen to the explanation of why your student wants – or is thinking about – changing his/her major.
- Caution your student to seek advice from their academic advisor, First-Year Success Coach and The Center for Career and Professional Development during this time of questioning. Students do not need to navigate this process by themselves. We are here help.
- Encourage participation in job shadowing over winter break. If your student has any ideas about particular careers that he/she may be interested in, getting out and seeing others in the workplace will be beneficial.

Check out these resources from The Center for Career & Professional Development:

[FAQs about Choosing a Major](#)

[Focus 2 Career Assessment](#)

THE CENTER FOR FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE'S *mission* IS TO...

“... help Clarion's first year students to courageously go after their dreams with the confidence to know that they can.”

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